

AMENDMENTS

In the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for transporting sheets into a fixed image reading position, comprising:

a drive roller; and

a pad having comprising a lower layer made of a flexible material and an upper layer provided disposed on the lower layer and made of a rigid material in the form of film with a kinetic friction coefficient of 0.2 or less, the pad being biased to the drive roller so that only the upper layer contacts a peripheral surface of the drive roller to form a nipping region between the drive roller and the pad by a compressive deformation of the flexible lower layer of the pad, wherein the pad is configured within the apparatus so that sheets traveling between the driver roller and the pad do not come in contact with the flexible material that has a kinetic friction coefficient higher than the rigid material of the upper layer.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the lower layer of the pad has a compressive residual strain of 10% or less.

3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the upper layer of the pad is made of an electrically conductive material.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the lower layer of the pad is made of an electrically conductive material.

5. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 4, wherein configured so that an electrostatic charge generated by a contact between the upper layer with the and a sheet is discharged through the lower layer.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the pad is biased toward the drive roller by a spring.

7. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for transporting sheets into a fixed image reading position, comprising:

a drive roller;

~~a pad having a rigid backup portion[,] comprising a top surface facing the driver roller;~~

~~a lower layer made of a flexible material and covering the entire top surface of the rigid~~

~~backup portion;~~

~~an upper layer provided disposed~~ on the lower layer and made of ~~a~~ rigid material ~~in the~~
~~form of film~~ with a kinetic friction coefficient of 0.2 or less; and

a spring which biases the [[pad]] rigid backup portion to the drive roller so that only the upper layer contacts a peripheral surface of the drive roller to form a nipping region between the drive roller and the [[pad]] upper layer by a compressive deformation of the flexible lower layer of the pad.